

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for displaying a hierarchical structure, comprising:

a memory configured to store a database for a plurality of classes having a hierarchical structure; and

a display configured to output at least part of a first area of one class and at least part of a second area of at least one child class belonging to the one class, the one class and the at least one child class being defined in the plurality of classes, and the first area including the second area.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein said display outputs all of the first area including all of the second area.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein said display outputs class information related to the one class or the at least one child class.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3,  
wherein said display outputs a list of

properties included in the one class or the at least one child class.

5. The apparatus according to claim 4,  
wherein said display outputs property information related to one property from the list of properties.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein said display outputs a mark in correspondence with each class of the first area and the second area, and

wherein the mark represents that a corresponding class hierarchically includes a child class.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

an operation unit configured to indicate whether an area of the child class is displayed in an area of the corresponding class.

8. The apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein a status of the mark of the corresponding class of which the area of the child class is displayed is different from a status of the

mark of the corresponding class of which the area of the child class is not displayed.

9. The apparatus according to claim 8,  
wherein a status of the mark of the corresponding class of which the child class has an instance is different from a status of the mark of the corresponding class of which the child class does not have an instance.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9,  
wherein said display outputs another mark in corresponding with the child class which has the instance.

11. The apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein said operation unit selects a class to display direct classes from the plurality of classes, and

wherein said display outputs the direct classes to which the class belongs.

12. The apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein said operation unit sets a universal root class commonly including a first hierarchical structure derived from a first root class and a

second hierarchical structure derived from a second root class.

13. The apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein said operation unit sets a retrieval start point to the one class of the first area on said display, and

wherein a retrieval object is limited to the child class having the instance.

14. The apparatus according to claim 13,  
wherein said operation unit sets the retrieval start point to a class including at least two child classes each having an instance.

15. The apparatus according to claim 5,  
wherein the child class inherits at least one property of each of a plurality of parent classes in the plurality of classes stored in said memory.

16. The apparatus according to claim 15,  
wherein a display status of the child class inheriting at least one property of each of the plurality of parent classes is different from a display status of another child class not inheriting at least one property of each of the plurality of

parent classes.

17. The apparatus according to claim 16,  
wherein said operation unit indicates a  
reference of an inheritance source class of one  
property of the child class inheriting at least one  
property of each of the plurality of parent classes,  
and

wherein the inheritance source class is one of  
the plurality of parent classes.

18. The apparatus according to claim 5,  
wherein a color of a property in the list of  
properties of the child class as an inheritance  
destination class is the same as a color of the  
parent class having the property as the inheritance  
source class.

19. The apparatus according to claim 1,  
wherein said operation unit sets a number of  
hierarchical levels for a plurality of classes at an  
initialization mode to display the hierarchical  
structure of the plurality of classes.

20. The apparatus according to claim 19,  
wherein said operation unit sets an identifier

of each class to be expansibly displayed in the plurality of classes at the initialization mode.

21. A method for displaying a hierarchical structure, comprising:

storing a database for a plurality of classes having a hierarchical structure; and

displaying at least part of a first area of one class and at least part of a second area of at least one child class belonging to the one class, the one class and the at least one child class being defined in the plurality of classes, and the first area including the second area.

22. A computer program product, comprising:

a computer readable program code embodied in said product for causing a computer to display a hierarchical structure, said computer readable program code comprising:

a first program code to store a database for a plurality of classes having a hierarchical structure; and

a second program code to display at least part of a first area of one class and at least part of a second area of at least one child class belonging to the one class, the one class and the at least one

child class being defined in the plurality of  
classes, and the first area including the second  
area.